Add 'snacks' provision to 504 plans of students with food Section 504 Compliance Advisor March 2009

I. Include 'alternative snacks' provision in student 504 plans.

- OCR has found that districts did NOT violate Section 504 when the student's plan
 provided for alternative snacks (specifically listing hard candy) as a "safe" food in the
 student's individualized health plan.
- All Districts 504 plans for students with food allergies should specifically indicate how the school plans to provide alternative snacks during school activities.
- Ensure that your school staff is informed regarding this subject during planning meetings for students with allergies.
- Compile a nonexhaustive list of activities for which substitute snacks might be needed during the school year.

2. Think about student needs during school projects, bake sales, etc.

- The Section 504 law does NOT require the district/school to provide the exact equal amounts of any one substitute food or snack.
- The law requires that districts/schools take reasonable efforts to provide a comparative food or snack during any school activities.
- Clubs and indiviual classes that hold bake sales should offer allergen-free alternatives.

3. Remind parents about food allergies before school events involving any type of food.

- Districts/schools can ask parents to provide an ingredient list with their snacks.
- Mail a letter home to parents before any event, reminding them of students with

food allergies. @LRP Publications, 3/2009

Food, digestive allergies affect 3 million U.S. children, CDC says

According to a recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report, roughly 3 million U.S. children younger than 18 were announced in 2007 to have a food or digestive allergy in the previous 12 months. The number represents an 18% increase from 1997 and accounts for nearly 4% of the total age group.

While most public schools have created policies to protect students with food allergies, the data indicate educators and school nutritionists will need to remain prepared as more children are diagnosed.

The report found that 8 types of food account for 90% of all food allergies: Milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, fish shellfish, soy and wheat.
Allergic reactions to these foods by a person vary, such as:

- Tingling sensation around the mouth and lips, Developing hives and,
- Even dying, depending on the severity of the reaction.

Children who have food allergies are 2 or 4 times more likely to have other allergies and related conditions, such as asthma, compared to children who don't have food allergies, the report indicted. ©LRP Publications, 3/2009